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 Authority *NNN 959291*  
 By *CA* NARA Date *10-18-24* At \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_

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 A/ISS/IPS, Department of State  
 E.O. 12958, as amended  
 December 18, 2008

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## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20590

June 13, 1973

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER  
 THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Brezhnev Visit - Population Policy

We need a more cooperative Soviet attitude on policies and programs for helping the developing countries control population growth. Both the U.S. and the USSR will probably participate in the World Population Conference in August 1974.

As a first step, the subject could appropriately be discussed during the Brezhnev visit--with the limited objective of bi-lateral talks later in the year.

A paper for this purpose has been included in the briefing book.

*Theodore L. Elliot, Jr.*  
 Theodore L. Elliot, Jr.  
 Executive Secretary

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING PAPER

POPULATION - WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE

USSR Position

The USSR does not provide assistance to population/family planning programs of developing countries and makes no contribution to the UN Fund for Population Activities. Soviet representatives in UN bodies oppose (though less strongly than previously) resolutions or actions to strengthen population growth control programs. Unless there is an improvement in their present attitude, they and Eastern European countries will be a negative influence at the World Population Conference in August 1974.

US Position

We would like to see the USSR take a positive, cooperative attitude toward population growth control efforts of developing countries, toward population matters in UN bodies, and toward the World Population Conference, especially toward agreement by the Conference on an effective World Population Plan of Action.

We recommend that you:

-- Tell Chairman Brezhnev we realize the Soviets and the US tend to approach problems of world population growth from different points of view. Nevertheless, we believe our two countries should have common interests in helping the developing countries bring rapid population growth under control.

-- Point out that unless present growth rates are reduced there will be one billion more people in less developed countries by 1985. In less than 25 years there will be one billion more people in China/India alone.

-- Emphasize our concern that, if such growth rates continue, in a very few years a shortfall in grain production such as occurred last year could find the US and other grain exporting countries unable to supply all requests.

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-- State our concern also that current unprecedented rapid population growth will lead to violence and conflicts in or among over-populated, poor countries which could involve the US and the USSR despite our desire to avoid it.

-- Point out that a favorable Soviet attitude toward population growth control programs in developing countries and harmonious Soviet and US positions at the World Population Conference in Bucharest in August 1974 could help reduce these dangers and contribute to stability in both developing and developed countries.

-- Propose bi-lateral talks on this subject later in the year.

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BRIEFING PAPER

POPULATION - WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE

Soviet ideology and positions:

Until recently the Soviet position on world population matters followed the traditional Marxist ideology that any imbalance between increase of people and increase of food and goods is the result of capitalism and that a change for Marxist socialism and development will rectify the situation. This attitude has somewhat softened recently and some Soviet experts concede publicly that there may be situations where LDCs should attempt to reduce birth rates. Soviet representatives in UN bodies generally take positions ranging from opposition to abstention on issues concerning assistance to population growth control programs. They do not contribute to any such programs or to the UN Fund for Population Activities. They appear to be motivated, at least in part, by their desire to increase the low rate of population growth in the European part of the USSR.

The World Population Conference

The UN World Population Conference will be at Bucharest, August 1974. We want to make it a major, effective force for more determined efforts to bring world population growth under control. The principle operative document to come out of the conference will be a World Population Plan of Action. The Soviet attitude toward this Plan - negative or cooperative - can influence how strong it will be. Present indications are that their attitude unless changed will be at best unhelpful. A change is important.

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2.

Development of Soviet Cooperation

We believe Soviet leadership has not yet understood the implications of rapid population growth for Soviet interests. They may be aware of the population growth of China and India on their borders. They may not be aware that if the present growth rates of China and India continue, their combined populations will increase by one billion more people in less than 25 years. Other LDCs will add about two billion people by the end of the century.

They also may not fully realize that long before these vast numbers are reached, the food-population balance will be so precarious that a shortfall in production even less than that which has recently been occurring in the USSR, India, Southeast Asia, Central Africa and elsewhere would create demands on the US and other grain exporting countries beyond their ability to supply all requests.

They also may not realize that the magnitude and momentum of population growth in many LDCs will almost certainly result in stagnation of their development, spreading disappointment and dissatisfaction of their people, internal violence, collapse of some governments, efforts by other governments to direct attention from internal problems by external adventures, and aggression against neighbors for land, water, resources. These results of unrestrained population growth will undermine and threaten the prospects for a generation of peace. They will create dangers of involvement by the US and the USSR against our will.

A frank statement of our views of these facts to Chairman Brezhnev might engage his attention and encourage a reexamination of Soviet interests in world population matters based on realities rather than doctrine.

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3.

Bi-lateral discussion

We have discussed population topics with Soviet representatives in and around various UN bodies. We have never had a bi-lateral discussion on population policies at a senior policy level. The seriousness and urgency of the problem and the fact of the World Population Conference in August 1974 make it desirable to have such discussions no later than the end of the year.

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